

North Chicago VA News



VA Great Lakes
Health Care System
VISN 12

North Chicago
VA Medical Center
3001 Green Bay Road
North Chicago, Illinois 60064

February 2005

NewsBits

2004 Combined Federal Campaign
Congratulations! Our medical center surpassed our goal by 21% with total contributions of \$36,255.66. Co-chairpersons this year were Greg Gola, Mental Health and Bonnie Kimoto, Food and Nutrition Service.

Operation Gratitude

Thanks to all staff who donated items and/or cash for care packages sent to our Troops Serving Overseas during the holiday season.

The large amount of items, as well as the variety collected, was spectacular. A total of 40 packages to 40 individuals! Included in the recipients were one employee, four immediate family members of staff, and individuals whose names were obtained from www.OperationMilitaryPride.ORG. Recipients of the packages were very grateful. Pictured below from left is Kathy Dong, Marlene Bremmer, Lyle Walters, Donna Williams, John L. White, Joe Kohler, Mary Roseborough, Colleen Smoger, and Rafael Benozza.



North Chicago VAMC Launches New Mission, Vision, Values



Over the past several months, we have been involved in a medical center wide process of re-examining our Mission, Vision and Values Statement.

The feedback received from the medical center's employees following release of the initial draft for comments coupled with the contributions from among over 100 community stakeholders who had the opportunity to provide input points to the excitement the VA/Navy partnership is generating.

The partnership with the Great Lakes Naval Hospital is of a scope never before attempted between a DoD military hospital and a VA medical center. The changes that will be occurring as this partnership unfolds are reflected in the New Mission, Vision and Values.

OUR MISSION

This is why we're here.

We are a caring community, proud to provide patient centered, coordinated health care to Veterans, Navy and other VA/DOD sharing patients.

OUR VISION

This is what we strive for in everything we do.

Creating the future of federal health care through excellence in patient care, customer service, education and research.

OUR VALUES

These are the common beliefs that guide how we act.

Trust, Diversity, Teamwork, Pride, Creativity.

We are all contributing to making our Mission, Vision and Values more than just words. Consider for a moment what the impact would be on the Medical Center if the unit you work in STOPPED ITS SERVICES. Whether those services involve patients directly or indirectly - they matter. And at this particular time our Medical Center's history is in the making as our partnership with Great Lakes Naval Hospital moves forward. We all play a significant role in striving to achieve our VISION -----*Creating the future of federal health care through excellence in patient care, customer service, education and research.*

North Chicago News

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The PREP Program Helps Marine Corps Reserve With Toys For Tots

This past holiday season, Preparation Rehabilitation Employment Program (PREP) lent a helping hand to the Marine Corps Reserve and their program Toys for Tots. The Marines delivered over 800 toys to the PREP Program and the PREP residents bagged and delivered the toys door to door. In past years, PREP residents sold popcorn, raffle tickets and gave dances to raise money for Christmas gifts for needy children in Lake County. This year, the Marine Corps Reserve asked for help and the PREP residents delivered toys in Cook



as well as Lake County. Thanks for brightening the holidays for these children!

Director's Corner

As 2004 comes to a close we can all look back to a productive year and the wonderful job staff did in caring for our patients. This past year has been filled with exciting times, including the revamping of our mission, vision and values statements; implementing the promise kept, PROUD TO CARE and OSCAR/WOW awards; awarding of Bldg. 131 construction project; improvement to the environment of care in Bldgs. 134 and 11; awarding of the OR/ER construction project that will begin in early 2005 and the one year anniversary of the VA/Navy mental health unit, just to name a few.

As 2005 is upon us we know it will be a challenging year regarding our budget, but I must say we will do everything we can to assure our patients continue to receive the excellent care they are accustomed to receiving. The joint venture between North Chicago VAMC and Naval Hospital Great Lakes will continue to receive a lot of attention. The OR/ER project will move into full swing as the construction to build four new operating rooms and expand our emergency department

begins. Also, the siting of the ambulatory care center for the Navy should be determined in early 2005, which we will hear much more about in the coming weeks and months ahead.

I want to express my thanks and appreciation for your commitment to serving our patients and making sure they receive the highest quality care possible. I hope the holiday season was a joyous time for you, your family and friends as we all look ahead to a new year.

PROUD TO CARE



Our special Santa, Dennis Lamb from Facility Support, drew the raffle winners.

Holiday Party Draws Festive Crowd



Incentive Funds Proposal

In FY 2003, the National Defense Authorization Act, Public Law 107-314, Section 721 required that DoD and VA establish a joint incentive program, through the creation of a DoD-VA Health Care Sharing Incentive Fund. The intent of the program is to identify, fund and evaluate creative local, regional and national sharing initiatives. The criteria used to evaluate proposals for the incentive funds included:

- Improved access to beneficiaries
- Improved quality of care
- Number of beneficiaries impacted by the initiative
- Supports VA/DoD Joint Strategic Plan
- Congruent with corporate direction
- Exportable to other facilities

Two reviews were performed utilizing the criteria listed above. Reviews were performed by members of VA's Resources Sharing Office, Patient Care Services, the Office of the Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management,

Office of Health Informatics and from DoD's Services Health Affairs and TRICARE Management Activity. Fifty-eight proposals were originally received. Twenty-nine applications were selected to submit more detailed information including a cost benefit analysis. Twelve of these projects totaling \$29,926,729 were funded. Prior to receiving the joint incentive funds, VA and DoD counterparts for selected projects must certify that recurring costs beyond the first two years will be funded from their existing budgets.

Naval Hospital Great Lakes and North Chicago VAMC were pleased to have two projects selected for funding.

Mammography and Stereotactic Mammography Services: As part of the ongoing integration of services between VA and DoD at Great Lakes, the activities propose purchase of equipment and additional staffing to expand capacity to service both women veterans and DoD beneficiaries. Mammography services for VA are

currently outsourced, and DoD routine appointment waiting time for mammography is well beyond the established access standard. The current mammography unit at NHGL is nearing the end of its life expectancy. The new unit will be located at Naval Hospital Great Lakes and once the Federal Ambulatory Care Center is constructed, will be moved there. Cost: \$470,000 in the first year; \$185,000 in the second year.

Women's Health Center: This project involves creation of a comprehensive women's health center to serve both women veterans and DoD beneficiaries. The money will be used to hire gynecology staff, purchase ultrasound equipment for a breast care clinic and hire two wellness education/case management nurses. Savings will come from coordination of services, decreased purchased care, and associated third party collections. Cost: \$852,000 in the first year and \$462,000 in the second year.

World Aids Day

The VA is the largest, single provider of HIV/AIDS care in the United States. The VA health care system has been involved in the fight against HIV/AIDS since the beginning of the epidemic. This year's theme is "Women, Girls, HIV and AIDS," which reflects a focus on how the effects of HIV/AIDS have significantly increased among women in general. Women now make up half of all people living with HIV worldwide (Public Health Strategic Health Care Group).

VA is participating in global efforts to recognize World AIDS Day. The North Chicago VA Medical Center and six other organizations in Lake County collaborated on activities in observance of World AIDS Day on Wednesday, December 1, 2004. Lake County Health Department, Alexian Brothers The Harbor, Catholic Charities, CommunityCare Healing Arts and Wellness, First Congregational United Church of Christ, and Prairie State Legal Services all participated in the celebration.

Events included viewing of the National AIDS Quilt, free anonymous HIV testing and counseling, educational sessions on HIV/AIDS prevention, and the legal issues pertaining to employment discrimination and confidentiality of HIV/AIDS. The day ended in a candlelight vigil walk to the First Congregational United Church of Christ for a multi-religious service to celebrate life. Throughout the day, World AIDS Day art response activities provided individuals the opportunity to express their feelings about HIV/AIDS through art onto quilt squares. Through this activity, the Lake County community HIV/AIDS quilt was initiated and presented at the end of the church service.

World AIDS Day is a celebration of the progress made in the battle against the epidemic and brings into focus the remaining challenges. World AIDS Day is also an opportunity to celebrate the lives of those who have passed from HIV/AIDS as well as those who are currently living with the virus (Public Health Strategic Health Care Group).

Our veterans appreciated this support. This was the first community gathering in the celebration of World AIDS Day. North Chicago VA Medical Center looks forward to continuing this partnership in efforts to increase awareness about HIV/AIDS.

Diversity Day

The Third Annual Diversity Day Celebration was held on Wednesday, Nov. 17. Each year this celebration gets bigger and better - over 500 food samples tickets were sold this year. The program began with the parade of flags from around the world. Entertainment was provided in a variety of ways: Scottish bagpipes, African-American vocalist, ethnic India dance, and a Polish violinist. Samples of ethnic food



were provided from 11 countries. Begin planning now to represent your country in next year's celebration.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Program:



On the afternoon of Wed., Jan. 12, veterans, staff, and visitors celebrated the life and legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. in honor of his birthday. The program included several local community leaders, a musical selection by Laster Shealey

(husband of our own Ms. Shealey, Program Chief of Nutrition & Food Service), a recital by Sharon Epps, an inspirational poet, a dance performance by Feet of Praise Dancers from the Christian Faith Fellowship Church, and the guest speaker local attorney Sherby Scurto.

A special thanks is extended to Karen Carstens and Mary Craigen, Co-chairpersons of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee, and its members: Charles Henry, Denise Lear, Michelle Mayes, and Earnestine Shealey.



Laster Shealey, Sherby Scurto, Sharon Epps, Reverend Percy L. Johnson, Patrick Sullivan, and Pastor Michael Horton.



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Volunteers Bring Holiday Cheer To Our Veterans!



Operation Christmas Cheer Celebrates 37 Years of Bringing the Holidays to Hospitalized Veterans

On Sunday, December 19th Operation Christmas Cheer celebrated 37 years of providing a quality holiday program to veterans at the North Chicago VA Medical Center. Operation Christmas Cheer is sponsored by the 5th District Veterans

of Foreign Wars (VFW) and Auxiliary and was initiated by Don Librande, who was the Chairman for the first 25 years. Ken Hauser, who is the Chaplain for the 5th District VFW, has been the Chairman for the past 12 years. Hauser says, "Our purpose is to spend some quality time visiting with hospitalized veterans singing Christmas songs, giving out gift boxes and letting the men and women who served this country know that they are

not forgotten. It is a small way to say thank you."

This year was a huge success. Operation Christmas Cheer provided over \$50,000.00 worth of gifts to 410 veterans at the North Chicago VA Medical Center. The day before the event VFW and Auxiliary members volunteered to put together all of the gift boxes. Each box contained items including T-shirts, sweatshirts, hats, phone cards, canteen books, and lots of snacks.

The VFW and Auxiliary should be applauded and commended for taking on such a huge project for all of these years and for bringing so much joy and happiness to our veterans.

Pictured are members of the VFW, VFW Auxiliary, and the Waukegan J.R.O.T.C. helping with this year's event at North Chicago VA Medical Center.

Employees From Motorola Provide Hospitalized Veterans with Holiday Gifts

For the third year in a row, employees from Motorola in Libertyville, Illinois, asked every veteran in Building 134 Nursing Home at the North Chicago VA Medical Center for 3 things they would like to have for the holidays. The employees would pick names and purchase those items, which even included this year White Castle hamburgers. On Friday, December 17th, Motorola employees came to North Chicago VA Medical Center and distributed all of the individual gifts to veterans in the Nursing Home. They presented individual personal gifts to over 120 hospitalized veterans. "This is a major undertaking and the Motorola employees should be commended for their generosity and



compassion," states Patrick L. Sullivan, Medical Center Director. Sullivan adds, "The veterans are really touched by these gifts and they talk about them for many weeks after the holidays."

Picture: Employees from Motorola in Libertyville, Illinois, get ready to distribute holiday gifts to hospitalized veterans at the North Chicago VA Medical Center.